Vol. VIII. Numb 48

THE OBSERVATOR.

On the Frauds committed by the Collectors of the Taxes in the Pariſh of St. James's Weſtminſter. *On the general Corruption and Bribery complain'd of in moſt publick Offices thro' the Nation, and the Neceſſity of a Committee of Grievances, to enquire into it. The Diſcouragement that honeſt Commiſſioners and Officers have labour'd under. A Letter to the* Obſervator *about employing the* Palatines, *and a Computation of what Money may be neceſſary to build Houſes for 'em, and ſet 'em at Work; with Remarks upon it.*

From Wednesday, July 13. to Saturday, July 16. 1709.

Country-m. WE muſt remember our Promiſe about the Collectors of St. *James's Weſtminſter*, Maſter.

Obſ. With all my Heart, *Roger*. The Gentleman who writ to me about that Matter ſays, they are now under an Inquiſition, for having many Years collected large Sums, and appropriated them to their own Uſe, over and above what they were to collect for the Uſe of the Publick, according to Law; that one Mr. *T------le*, who has been a Collector for many Years, a frequent Jury-man, and lately H---- C------le of that City, has confeſs'd himſelf guilty of ſuch Practices. We have likewiſe had an Account in the publick Prints, that within theſe ten Years laſt, ſeveral Collectors of that Pariſh have cheated the Inhabitants of 40000 *l.* that ſome of them have own'd the Fact, and pay'd back Part of the Money, that Enquiry is making after the reſt; and we have ſeen an Advertiſment in one of the Prints, that the Commiſſioners of the ſaid Pariſh deſire all Perſons who have any Receipts for the Land-Tax, perſonal Eſtates, or Stocks in Trade, from 1699 to 1709, to ſend the ſame to the ſaid Commiſſioners, that they may have Right done them: So that if People be not wanting to themſelves, all thoſe Frauds may be diſcover'd, the Guilty puniſh'd, and oblig'd to refund, if they be able; which I think makes the Gentleman's Deſire, that I ſhould enquire into thoſe Practices, in order to expoſe them, needleſs; for thoſe Gentlemen who are Commiſſioners for that Pariſh, are beſt capable, as they are moſt concern'd, to do it.

Country-m. I think ſo too, Maſter, and hope they will do it effectually, without Partiality, that the Guilty may be puniſh'd, according to the Merits of ſo heinous a Crime; tho' at the ſame Time I am of Opinion, that there ought to be a Diſtinction of Criminals, ſuch as have voluntarily confeſs'd, and made Reſtitution according to their Power, may deſerve ſome Pity, eſpecially if they be ingenious in diſcovering their Fellow-Criminals; but for ſuch as are obſtinate, I would ſhew them no more Pity, than I would to a High-way-man.

Obſ. The Crime is of a more heinous Nature, *Roger*, becauſe the Fraud was carry'd on under the Umbrage of the Authority of Queen and Parliament; ſo that to me it would ſeem to deſerve the Cenſure of both Houſes, when they meet. To cheat one Pariſh of 40000 *l.* under the Name of publick Taxes, is ſuch a Thing, as for ought I know was never heard of, and no Doubt will be reſented by the Parliament, as an unpreſidented Abuſe of their Authority; which makes it a Cheat of ſo tranſcendent a Nature, that I queſtion whether we have any Law that can inflict a Puniſhment ſuitable to the Crime; therefore I hope the *Weſtminſter* Members will, if deſir'd by the Inhabitants, lay it before the Houſe, in order to a thro' Enquiry; and that other Collectors thro' the Kingdom will take Warning by it, to beware of the like Frauds. God knows how hard many poor Houſe-keepers find it to live, conſidering the great Decay of Trade, and what Difficulty they have to pay legal Taxes; therefore to impoſe fraudulent ones upon them, is an Iniquity to be puniſh'd by the Judge.

Country-m. I am very ſorry to find Corruption to be ſo univerſal, and to have taken ſuch deep Footing in the Nation, Maſter. The Caſe of the *Orange* and Storm Briefs, mention'd in our Liſt, is another crying and execrable Fraud, that deſerves the ſevereſt Puniſhment. I hope our Parliament, when they meet, will enquire into the Abuſes ſo generally complain'd of by inferior Officers, and others, entruſted with collecting all the Branches of the Revenue. An Inquiſition, as the Gentleman words it, ſeems to be neceſſary for that End through the whole Kingdom. Corruption and Bribery, if we may believe the numerous Complaints on that Head, are become ſo general, that nothing leſs than the Power of the Legiſlature, ſeems capable to redreſs it.

Obſ. Therefore I hope, *Roger*, when the Parliament meets, they will appoint a Committee to enquire into Grievances, and particularly that crying one of Corruption and Bribery, and into the Frauds committed by thoſe entruſted with the ſeveral Branches of the Revenue. One would wonder, that the Book printed by the *London* Diſtillers, complaining of the Abuſes in the *Exciſe*, tho' dedicated to the Houſe of Commons, ſhould not have been more taken Notice of, which certainly muſt have proceeded from a Want of due Management or Courage in the Complainers. We ſee alſo frequent Advertiſements in the *Gazette*, of Letters ſent to the Lord High Admiral, complaining of Abuſes and Frauds relating to the Navy. We have had many Books writ upon that Subject, and one very lately call'd, *The Royal Navy*, publiſh'd by *B. Bragge*, which ſhews the Diſeaſe to be almoſt incurable, by any other Way than a Parliamentary Application to inforce old Laws, or to make new ones, and duly to enquire after, and puniſh Offenders. We have lately ſeen an Advertiſment in one of our publick Papers, of Cheats put upon her Majeſty at *Newcaſtle*, by ſome concern'd in the Drawbacks upon Salt. We have another no longer ago than *Wedneſday* laſt, of bringing in great Quantities of *French* Wine, contrary to Law, by Collusion with ſome Officers of the *Cuſtoms*, and of giving Writs of Appraiſement and Delivery, by Conſent, out of the Court of *Exchequer*, by which the fair Traders to *Portugal* are abus'd, and the Queen cheated of her Revenues; which it ſeems Mr. *Charles Roberſon*, formerly an Officer of the *Cuſtoms*, takes upon him to detect, and deſires a Meeting with Merchants, in order to make Application for a Redreſs of thoſe Things, which he offers to prove againſt the next Sitting of Parliament. All thoſe Things together, *Roger*, ſeem to plead very ſtrongly for a Committee of Grievances.

Country-m. I agree with you, Maſter; for tho' there be Perſons of great Worth and Integrity in the Commiſſions of *Cuſtoms*, *Exciſe*, and in other Poſts under the Government, yet I have heard it complain'd of, there has been ſo much of the old

Leaven

Leaven continu'd in moſt Offices, that Men of Honour and true *Britiſh* Principles, have not been able to get Abuſes of ſo long a Standing, rectify'd, without expoſing themſelves to a Torrent of Clamour and Malice; ſo that their Names have frequently been made uſe of to cover other Mens Faults, without their being able to do the Good they deſign'd, and have many Times been made ſo uneaſy, as to be forc'd to reſign or ſit mute; and there's ſuch a Multitude of diſaffected *Jacobite* Fellows in inferior Poſts, that honeſt Officers can't live among 'em; but being run down by thoſe ill-principl'd Men, their Lives are either made a Burden to them, or they have been toſs'd from one Place to another, and at laſt turn'd out, to the great Damage of the Revenue, the Oppreſſion of the Subject, and the Diſcouragement of honeſt Men.

Obſ. The many Complaints we have had ſent us of that Nature, *Roger*, has convinc'd me, that there ſeems to be a Neceſſity for a Committee of Grievances, before whom, thoſe who are capable of diſcovering ill Practices, may lay their Complaints, without Fear of ill Treatment, or Danger of being turn'd out of their Employments, if they can make good their Charge: And as ſuch a Committee, by laying Things before the Houſe, would effectually over-awe the Greateſt, and keep them from protecting Criminals, ſo it would put a Stop to unjuſt Clamours againſt Superiors, by inferior Officers, who would not dare to offer any trifling or unjuſt Accuſations, founded only upon Malice, to the Parliament; which would be ſure to puniſh them for ſuch a malicious Way of proceeding, as they would protect them, if they found their Accuſations important and juſt; of which, the Conduct of the Houſe of Lords, with Relation to Complaints formerly about victualling the Fleet, is a very good Inſtance.

Country-m. Here's another Letter from a very honeſt and underſtanding Gentleman to you about the *Palatines*, Maſter. He is very ſollicitous that there may be no Error committed at firſt in the Way of employing them, leſt it ſhould continue to be wrong to the End; and wiſhes, that the publick Advantage may be more conſider'd in that Matter, than private Views.

Obſ. There are ſo many Perſons of Honour, Capacity, and publick Spirits in the Commiſſion, *Roger*, that we have no Reaſon to doubt, but they will chuſe out of all the Propoſals laid before them, what ſhall rationally appear to be the moſt advantagious Way of employing theſe poor People, ſo as to keep up the Reputation of the Naturalization-Act, and make the Advantage of it to the Nation evident, as well as to make it a proper Encouragement for foreign Proteſtants to come and ſettle among us.

Country-m. But he hints, Maſter, that ſome have talk'd of making them capable of earning their Bread in the Woollen Manufactories in two Months Time; which he thinks to be impoſſible, and that the far greateſt Part of them being Huſband-men and Vine-dreſſers, they can never be capable of ſuch Work.

Obſ. You know I have given my Opinion already, *Roger*, that I think them moſt proper to be employ'd in Huſbandry or Planting, which they have been bred to; and ſince we have ſo much waſte Ground in the Iſland to be improv'd that Way, for which we want Hands, and perhaps thoſe we have are inferior to them in Skill, I am ſtill of the Mind, that it were beſt to employ them ſo. You know alſo, that I have propos'd they ſhould not be employ'd in ſuch Things as already ſet any of our own Poor at Work; and for the Woollen Manufactory, which has ſo long been the ſtaple Trade of *England*, I am of the Gentleman's Mind, they are not at all fit for it; our own People exceed all Nations in that. Beſides, conſidering the great Decay of that Trade, I am afraid we have more Work-men of our own, than we can employ in the Woollen Manufacture; therefore I hope the Gentleman's Fears will be obviated in that Reſpect: But as to his Objection againſt building a City or Town for them, I don't take it to be of equal Weight; I rather think, that if they were ſettl'd in little Towns for improving Huſbandry, it might be of vaſt Advantage to the Nation, and an effectual Way to convince ſome of our great landed Men of their Error, who have depopulated ſeveral Parts of the Country, by unpeopling conſiderable Villages, and turning them into ſingle Farms; which, tho' they may think it more profitable for the preſent, muſt at laſt prove fatal to the Nation. As to his Computation, that it will require 90000 *l.* to build Houſes and Gardens for 1500 Families, and to afford them a Year's Maintenance, perhaps it may be juſt enough, if we likewiſe conſider, that they muſt be furniſh'd with Neceſſaries for carrying on their Huſbandry and Trades: But we have Reaſon to hope, that a great Part of the Money may be rais'd by the Briefs, if our Clergy of all Sorts do but teſtify their Zeal, by encouraging their Hearers to ſuch a neceſſary Piece of Chriſtian Charity; and if there be due Care taken to prevent the Miſapplication of it by ſuch Regiſters as *Maydwell*, *&c.* for the reſt it may be eaſily rais'd by a Corporation of Subſcribers, as I formerly mention'd, if Love to the *Mammon* of Unrighteouſneſs, and the unjuſt Prejudices ſo wickedly fomented againſt the Naturalization-Act, have not extinguiſh'd all Chriſtian Charity, and Senſe of national Intereſt among us. But more of theſe Thing another Time, *Roger*.

Advertiſements.

This Day is publiſh'd,

☞ The Life and Adventures of Capt. John Avery, the famous Engliſh Pirate, Crown'd from a Cabbin-boy to a King, now in Poſſeſſion of Madagaſcar; being a true Hiſtorical Account of his Birth, Parentage, Education, Miſfortunes and Succeſſes, viz. His ſerving the Government on Board the Ruby Prize and Non-ſuch Men of War. The Reaſons why he quitted that Service, for that of the Merchants; and his Sailing to Jamaica, where he diſpos'd of the Ship's Cargo. His taking a large Ship, worth above 100000 Sterling, belonging to the Great Mogul, with his Grand daughter on Board, whom he marry'd. The Method he took to eſtabliſh himſelf. His Wealth, Strength, and Acquiſitions by Sea and Land. His Character. The ſeveral Overtures he has made to return to his Obedience. A Deſcription of the Country; with its Cuſtoms, Manners, &c. Written by a Perſon who made his Eſcape from thence, and faithfully extracted from his Journal. Sold by J. Baker, at the Black Boy in Pater-Noſter-Row. Price 6 d.

Juſt publiſh'd,

☞ James, Prince of Northland; or, an Anſwer to Dr. Woodward's falſe Friend, in Vindication of the Reverend Mr. Sharp, the Curate of Stepney. Herod and Pontius Pilate are agreed. King Charles I. Part 1. Sold by B. Bragge in Pater-Noſter-Row. Price 1 d.

Juſt publiſh'd,

☞ A ſhort Diſcourſe of the Quinteſſence or Tincture of the Philoſophers; wherein is ſet forth, how ſome one particular ſelect Perſon may be made Partaker of it, by the Author's Means, and others rightly directed in proſecuting that Study. Sold by J. Baker at the Black Boy in Pater-Noſter-Row; J. Ilied, at the Golden Ball in Fleet-Street; A. Feltham and Fox, Weſtminſter-hall; and S. Mabbatt, Greys-Inn. Price 4 d.

Juſt publiſh'd,

☞ Love without Affectation, in five Letters from a Portugueſe Nun, to a French Cavalier. Done into Engliſh Verſe from the neweſt Edition lately printed at Paris. To which is added, a prefatory Diſcourſe of the Nature and Uſe of ſuch Epiſtles in general, with the Excellency of theſe in particular; the Time when they were written, the Reaſons why, the true Names and Circumſtances of the Perſons concern'd in them, and undeniable Proofs given of the pretended Anſwers to them (which go under the Name of the Chevalier Del) being ſpurious. Never extant before, and communicated to the Tranſlator in Verſe by unqueſtionable Authorities. Sold by J. Woodward in Threadneedle-ſtreet, and J. Morphew near Stationers-hall. Price 1 s.

☞ The Scourge of Venus and Mercury, repreſented in a Treatiſe of the Venereal Diſeaſe; together with an Appendix in anſwer to Mr. John Marten's Reflexions thereupon. By J. Sintelaer, Practitioner in Phyſick, and Author of the Royal Decoction. Price of the Appendix alone bound 6 d, together 3 s. 6 d. Sold by J. Helms in Weſtminſter-hall, R. Gelling at the Mitre in Fleet-ſtreet, W. Carter at the Green Dragon in St. Paul's Church-yard, J. Phillips at the black Bull in Cornhill, H. Ribotteau at the Crown near Cecil-ſtreet in the Strand, B. Picard at the 3 Bibles in the Minories, J. Harding in St. Martins-lane near Long-acre, J. Morphew near Stationers-hall, and by the Author at his Dwelling-houſe (late the Duke of Leeds's) in high Holborn, over againſt little Turn-ſtile.

ANTIVENEREAL-PILLS, &c. which perfectly carry off the Infection of a Clap, or Running of the Reins, and compleat the Cure in a few Days Time, without any Hindrance of Buſineſs. They free the Body of the Remains of any ill-cur'd Pox or Clap, and of Mercury (unſkilfully given.) They are ſafe and pleaſant in their Operation, and may be depended on for an effectual, private, and ſpeedy Cure, even in the moſt ſtubborn and inveterate (curable) Pox, when attended with violent Aches, Pains, Night-pains Ulcers, &c. as their Author can truly affirm from Experience, he having, as he believes, perform'd more eminent Cures in that Diſeaſe within theſe laſt ten Years of his Practice, than any other Phyſician or Surgeon in Great Britain has done in that Time. Theſe Pill's are 3 s. the Box; and his other Medicines, which any particular Caſe may require, of moderate Prices. To be had at the Golden Ball in the dark Paſſage three Doors beyond the Sun Tavern in Honey-lane Market in Cheapſide. Where alſo may be had his Book call'd QUACKERY UNMASK'D, which is a rational and effectual Anſwer to the 6th Edition of Mr. Marten's Treatiſe concerning the Venereal Diſeaſe, its Appendix, and the charitable Surgeon. Price bound 1 s. 6 d.

LONDON, Printed by *H. Meere*, and ſold by *B. Bragge* in *Pater-Noſter-Row*. 1709.